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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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VOL. 6 NO. 19
FIRST ISSUE OF
NOVEMBER 1976
Issue # 141

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FUTURE OF SP'S COMMUTE LINE

PLANS FOR BOSTON COMMUTER RAIL

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ON THE COVER:

A pair of F40 engines, with #229 in front, leads the SAN JOAQUIN thru Shellmound (Emeryville) CA on the first westbound Amfleet trip, Oct 19. RTN illustration.

CARS & CONSISTS

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 6, Oakland-Sparks, Oct 31: engines 583 (SDP), 376, 377 (F's), 625, 626 (SDP's); cars 1056, 1591, 5016, 4810, 3370, 8072, 2715, 2651, 7521-7522, 7523-7524, 3500, 7529-7528, 7531-7530, 3260 "Wingate Brook."

*INTER-AMERICAN, train 21, Alton IL, Oct 31 (1st southbd run of expanded service): engines 412, 417 (E8's); cars 1194, 1407, 2832, 8323, 4404, 4402 (Chi-St. Louis:) 5805, 5803, 5801, 5802. Train 22, same: engines 368, 429 (E8's); cars 5805, 5803, 5801, 5802 (from St. Louis), 4437, 4842, 8324, 2521, 1428, private car 33 "Jean Pierre." (Northbd train routed via Roodhouse IL due to freight derailment.)

*ABRAHAM LINCOLN, train 303, Alton IL, Oct 29 (last run): engines 400 (E8), 603 (SDP); cars 1602, 5660, 5802, 5801, 5803, 5805, 8323, dome 9320 "Silver Terrace", private car 33 "Jean Pierre" owned by Tom Guibault.

*SUNSET LIMITED, train 1, Houston Oct 13: engines 555, 559; cars 1064, 9907, 9959, 9954, 9933, 3394, 8038, 2756, 2366, 2805, dome 9253 "Silver Lookout." Train 2, L.A., Nov 5: engines (?), baggage (?); cars 9942, 9931, 9960, 9926, 3393, 8031, 2751, 2362, 2712, 2603, 3260 "Wingate Brook" observation. Train 2, L.A., Oct 31: engines & bag(?); cars 9951, 9959, 9933, 3394, 8038, 2727 "Pine Pass", 2366 "Regal Pass", SR 2006 "Ocmulgee River."

*MOUNT RAINIER, train 797, Portland, Nov 7: engines 218, 215 (F40's); cars 21174, 20011, 21176, 21173, 21175, 20016, 21170, 21147, 21149, 20015, 21169, 21148.

*"Tam O'Shanter Express" campaign train for Senate candidate S. I. Hayakawa, L.A.-San Diego, Oct 30: engine 223 (F40); cars 21138, 21145, 20215, 21136. (Train ran 15 mins behind SAN DIEGAN #772.)

*"Senator Brock Victory Express" campaign train for Bill Brock, Johnson City-Chattanooga TN Oct 28-29: engine 4501; coaches 1038, 1039, 1035, 1037, bag 4061, barcoach 955 (all SR equipment), Clinchfield "White Oak" open end parlor observation.

*COAST STARLIGHT southbd makeup train, Oakland-L.A. Oct 29: engines 376, 377 (F's); cars 1049, 7519, 7533, 7532, 8503, 7520, 7512. Ran about 3½ hours late. Train 11, San Jose, Nov 2: engines 559, 555; cars 1154, 1500, 4856, 4857, 4866, 4500, 4460, 4518, 3350, 8041, 2713 "Pine Cavern", 2710 "Pine Arroyo", 3260 "Wingate Brook" obs.

*CR-TH&B-CP Rail Buffalo-Toronto train, Buffalo Nov 4: RDC9 9200, RDC2 9115.

*Three F units remain on Amtrak's roster: #375 is assigned to Chula Vista CA for the Turboliner program; 376 & 377 are at Oakland CA (see consists above).

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, South Bend, Oct 25: engines 596, 594; cars 1531, 2027 "Loch Ness" (to NY), 2705 "Winter Haven" (to NY), 2014 (Boston), 5856 & 5616 (Bos.), 8334, 3360 "Chessie Club", (to NY:) 5664, 5613, 6431, deadhead 6408.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, L.A., Oct 26: engines 223 (F40), 527 (old paint), 509 (new paint), 523 (new paint); cars 1107, 9990, 9916, 9955, 9970, 9961, 9907, 2219 "Indian Song", 3330, 2723 "Pine King", 2607 "Pacific Cove", 1048.

*SOUTHERN CRESCENT, Amtrak train 172, N.Y., Oct 13: engine (PC?) 4896 (GG-1, NY to Bos.), 901 (GG-1, DC to NY); cars SR 3400 "Emory River", SR 821 (both off at NY), 6023, 5237, 3321 "Molly Pitcher", 5645, 6001, 6046, 1369.

Rail Travel News, Vol. 6, No. 19 (Whole No. 141). First Issue of November, 1976.
Copyright © 1976 by Message Media.
Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $9.00 per year; single copy 40¢.
STAFF: Editor: James Russell. Editor-at-Large: Paul Rayton. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Los Angeles; Jack Ferry, Chicago; Kenneth Maylath, Baltimore; Peter Roehm, Boston.

IN THIS ISSUE:

As the article starting on page 9 was being typeset, both Business Week (Nov 22) and the Wall Street Journal (Nov 12) published articles on the current situation on SP's San Francisco commute line. Both publications missed the full story, which you can read in this issue. Peter Roehm (page 6) tells us of the future of Boston's MBTA. Our correspondents cover the inaugural runs of the SHENANDOAH and the combined AUTO-TRAIN/FLORIDIAN (pages 11-14). Plus much more in this big 24-page issue.

NATION ASSESSES EFFECT OF ELECTIONS ON TRANSPORTATION PICTURE

The Presidential elections of 1976 have come and gone, and the consensus seems to be that rail transportation will have easier going in the coming years than it did during the past two administrations. Two main questions are being asked:

What is President-elect Carter's stand on transportation? There has been little publicity on this, but the S.W. RR Historical Soc. published a summary of Carter's policy statement on railroad reorganization and highway trust funds: "Both statements indicate a consciousness toward balanced transportation. He points out the predominant position of the rails in freight hauling and their efficiency in respect to energy and pollution considerations. He mentions Amtrak and seems to be aware that mechanical and operating problems have played havoc with the system during the past 5 years. ConRail is discussed with the comparative tactics of cutting off 7000 miles of unprofitable branch lines to make the system profitable as opposed to depriving hundreds of communities of rail service. He stresses that ConRail cannot be approached as a separate problem but must be viewed as a part of a national comprehensive transportation policy, now totally lacking." The statement also mentions inequities in regulation of various modes, heavy subsidization of airports, canals and highways, along with heavy taxation of railroads with federal aid occurring only recently. On highway trust funds Carter questions whether the past approach can remain the same in the future. He says a balanced multi-modal approach provides the best answer to the nation's transportation problems. He calls for a national transportation policy with more balanced funding.

Who will be the next Secretary of Transportation? Former DOT Secretary Alan Boyd was one of Carter's chief transportation advisers, and could be a prime contender. Rep. Brock Adams of Washington State is mentioned as perhaps the leading possibility, along with Gov. Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts, N.Y. State Transportation Commissioner Raymond Schuler, and Illinois State Transportation Secretary Langhorne Bond. In any event, William Coleman will be bowing out in January, and he has declined to comment on his future plans (NY Times, Nov 14). He was a Philadelphia lawyer before his appointment by President Ford.

The Washington Star on Nov 6 reported that fans of public transit view Carter as a friend. As Governor of Georgia, Carter was positive in his support of MARTA and public transit in general. While in the Senate, Gerald Ford consistently voted to oppose public transit bills.

While the Democratic White House is expected to be more receptive to plans for spending public funds on rail transportation, the composition of Congress remains unchanged in terms of party balance--weighted in favor of Democrats--and so should remain favorable as in the past. However, several key legislative figures who supported rail service were defeated this month: Hartke of Indiana, Taft of Ohio, McGee of Wyoming, Tunney of California, Montoya of New Mexico among them.

AMTRAK REVEALS FIVE-YEAR EXPANSION PLAN

Amtrak released its yearly five-year plan to Congress and the White House shortly after the Nov 2 elections, and it proved to be the most ambitious plan the rail corporation has yet put forth. We expect to publish many more details of this in upcoming issues, but here we list the features of the plan already published by the Wall Street Journal. Amtrak wants to buy 638 more passenger cars: 153 more bilevel cars in fiscal 1978-9 for 4 Midwest-South routes; 365 modernized conventional single level cars for overnight Eastern trains, in fiscal 1978-81. (see page 20)

Rail Canada

AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT from an Amtrak source says that the planned Chicago-Port Huron-Toronto train has been dropped, and that any Chicago-Toronto train will run via Detroit, and would most likely be an extension of trains 350 and 355.

CONRAIL HAS NOTIFIED the Canadian Transport Commission that ConRail intends to form a Canadian subsidiary to operate the Canadian Southern Rwy in southern Ontario, with about 280 miles of route. ConRail holds 71% of the line's 150,000 common shares, but some opposition to the move is rising in the Toronto area. Parliament chartered the route in 1900. In 1903 it was leased for 999 years to Michigan Central, a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania. In 1930, a 99-year sublease transferred the route to New York Central. The Penn Central merger of 1968 saw PC control, which lasted until April 1, 1976.

A JOINT TIMETABLE for fall (effective Oct 31 to Apr 23) has been issued by CN and CP Rail, and it includes, as in the illustration, "VIA" logos with the two railroads' initials joined. In color-coded timetables, CN schedules are printed in blue, with CP Rail's in red. CN also has announced roundtrip excursion fares in the Quebec City-Windsor and Sarnia "corridor" effective Oct 1 to May 31. There are two plans, a 7-to-30-day and a one-day fare, both good any day except holiday periods.

"OCEAN" AND "SCOTIAN": two trains of special attraction to the rail fan. What do they look like in the fall off-season? Here are the consists of the two as they left Halifax on Oct 21: train 15 (OCEAN): engines 6780, 6636 (MLW-MP-A/B 18's); baggage 8105; 60-seat unreserved coach 5394; cafe-coach-lounge 3037 (44 coach seats, 9 lounge seats); 76-seat reserved coach 5396; 52-seat reserved Dayniter 5721; 48-seat diner 1350; club lounge 2316 "Beausejour"; 6-6-4 sleeper 1164 "Green Brook"; 6-6-4 sleeper 1166 "Greening"; (to be added at Matapedia--from Gaspe:) bag-dorm, 52-seat reserved Dayniter, 32-seat diner lounge, 76-seat reserved coach, 6-6-4 sleeper. Train 11 (SCOTIAN): engines 6760, 6859 (MLW-MP-A/B 18's); baggage 9664; bag-dorm 9476; 60-seat unreserved coach 5419; 76-seat reserved coach 5593; 52-seat reserved Dayniter 5713; 48-seat diner 1365; club lounge 2314 "Elan"; 6-6-4 sleeper 1165 "Green Court"; (to be added at Truro:) 76-seat reserved coach; cafe lounge; 52-seat Dayniter.

ONE OF CANADA'S leading industrial figures has called the new Montreal jetport a "mistake for the decade" and has urged Transport Minister Otto Lang to have the facility closed. William Turner, president and CEO for Consolidated-Bathurst Ltd., the pulp-and-paper combine, made the statement in a letter to the Montreal Gazette. Turner joins a growing number in criticizing the facility, built extravagantly on a 75,000-acre site 38 miles north of downtown Montreal. Most opponents want flights transferred back to Dorval adjacent to CN and CP passenger lines west of downtown. The airport's total cost may approach $1 billion when work is completed. A similar jetport slated for the Pickering site near Toronto has been stalled by opposition from the Ontario legislature.

CANADIAN NATIONAL APPLIED recently for permission to discontinue its train numbers 87 and 88, the NORTHLAND.

BRITISH COLUMBIA TRANSIT officials indicate a fare increase will be made soon. The basic fare on the Victoria and Vancouver systems remains at 25¢. Meanwhile, the articulated streetcar purchased from Sweden for demonstration use remains in storage in a Vancouver suburb with "no action" in sight.

ON OCTOBER 25 the morning GO Train from Hamilton to Toronto began non-stop operation after leaving Oakville, cutting 7 minutes from its schedule, and arriving Toronto at 8:10am. The last rush hour train eastbound from Toronto, at 6:33pm, was cancelled due to light patronage.

Urban-Suburban Transit

UMTA PROBLEMS ADMITTED: Robert Patricelli, UMTA Administrator, recently told Mass Transit magazine that problems in his agency include poor development of grant funding programs for planning, capital, and operations; and also cumbersome, outdated procedures. He apparently skipped over a third problem--political interference, such as indicated by charges in the press that a large grant to Detroit to start rapid transit construction was traced to a desire of President Ford to carry his own state of Michigan in the presidential elections.

SAN FRANCISCO'S CABLE-CAR system received an emergency $250,000 grant to begin replacement of 71 depression beams. The decades-old beams have failed thrice recently, causing cable cars to come to almost instant stops, hurling passengers from their seats. The beams keep the cable below street level at the foot of steep hills.

UMTA'S TRANSIT FUNDS are running low, Administrator Patricelli has warned. Of $7 billion appropriated in 1974 for mass transit, only $2.3 billion remain, to last until the end of 1980. He expects applications for $5 billion in funds from up to 14 cities in that time. Patricelli also said late last month that his agency has been able to cut red tape and speed up paperwork in processing requests for funds. During the month of September, UMTA announced the award of 65 grants totaling over $171 million.

CALIFORNIA STATE DEPARTMENT of Transportation is advertising for bids on the BART-Amtrak transfer station in Richmond. Construction of the $600,000 structure is expected to be completed by next summer. It will be built on both sides of the SP mainline adjoining the BART station, with elevators connecting with the BART tunnel between parking lot and BART station.

A $600 MILLION grant from UMTA to the city of Detroit announced Oct 19 is for the start of a mass transit system, the exact nature of which is apparently undecided.

CHICAGO'S SOUTH SHORE line has petitioned to quit commuter service. ICC hearings on the matter are expected early in 1977.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMMUTE line saw two pedestrian deaths this month: on Nov 12 a Santa Clara man was killed at 6:56am by a northbound commute train near his home; on Nov 15 a Menlo Park teen-aged boy was hit at 6:20pm near the Menlo Park station. Both victims were walking on the tracks.

TRANSIT NEWS BRIEFS: Milwaukee County Transit System was closed by a work stoppage of over 900 drivers in a complaint over increasing assaults and vandalism on buses... UMTA announced in early Nov. a $3 million grant to Pittsburgh for streetcar upgrading... A commuter train near Goes in the Netherlands struck a stopped freight train on Oct 27, killing 7 and injuring more... BART will shortly publish its annual report, which will show that farebox revenues increased 38% ($6 million) in fiscal 1975-76 because of increased ridership and fare boosts. BART spent $5 million less than its fiscal year budget in that time... ConRail commuter train crash in Seymour CT Nov 3 (train hit dump truck) resulted in about 6 minor injuries...

State of California is holding hearings on proposed tough new measures, such as freeway tolls, higher taxes, to limit automobile usage in cities...

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"The interstate highways have made fortunes for some and ruined others; meant prosperity for some towns and stagnation for others; created a whole new class of freeway oases near interchanges across the continent. The system has saved tens of thousands of lives, but is attacked as a concrete juggernaut that has both ravaged nature and destroyed cities."

--William K. Stevens in New York Times, Nov 14, on 20th anniversary of completion of first interstate segment.

THE NEXT FIVE YEARS OF BOSTON COMMUTER RAIL

by Peter Roehm

The Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority on September 21 narrowly approved the purchase of 270 miles of the Boston & Maine Railroad, along with considerable land, buildings and rolling stock. This, along with previous acquisitions of former Penn Central (NH and B&A) lines and equipment, will give the MBTA 440 miles of rail line in eastern Massachusetts and 220 cars and locomotives. Along with this vote for the sale came a favorable decision on a 5-year operating agreement with the B&M.

The vote had been close due to opposition from Boston, Cambridge, and Somerville, all of which felt that they would be out back taxes and future taxable land and facilities, as the MBTA is a state entity and pays no taxes. Altho the MBTA District is composed of 79 cities and towns, the vote of each community is weighted by other factors such as population, and Boston alone could have shot down the whole deal. In fact, Mayor White threatened to do so, but saner heads ruled, and Mayor White withdrew, altho still upset.

On October 5 word was received from UMTA that $100 million had been awarded the MBTA for the B&M purchase as well as other MBTA upgrading.

This purchase-upgrading falls under the MBTA GRIP-II program (Commuter Rail Improvement Program - Phase II), and includes: Acquiring the 270 miles of B&M line east of Fitchburg and north to the New Hampshire line except the Watertown branch, two segments of the Ayer to Lowell freight cutoff, and a couple of other stub switching branches such as Salisbury-Amesbury; upgrading to 70mph 104 miles of this line; refurbishing of the 84 B&M Budd cars; purchase of 22 ex-PC locomotives (GP-9s and E8s), 80 ex-PC and NH coaches and Budd cars; and 20 baggage cars; refurbishing of this ex-PC rolling stock; and upgrading the ConRail (ex-NH) Stoughton branch.

Alan Dustin, head of the B&M, the next morning at the RR Editors conference (see last issue), told me he was extremely pleased and only hoped he could sell the entire B&M in like manner (i.e., track et al., and lease back freight operating rights).

Some preliminary track upgrading on the Eastern Route and some cosmetic refurbishing (lavender liners) had already begun with other funds from other smaller grants and loans. Now it will be possible to put the whole system (NH, B&A, B&M) into shape so in time it can be unified as one operation with a uniform fare system and the ability to interchange rolling stock.

The 5-year operating agreement calls for the B&M to operate as an independent contractor for the account of the MBTA with all rolling stock owned by the latter. The B&M retains an easement to continue freight operations. It will have use of the engine terminal facility for 3 years, after which it must vacate it. An incentive plan is written into the agreement that calls for a payment of 10¢ per passenger annually to encourage and increase ridership.

The B&M currently operates under subsidy well over 200 daily trains on 5 routes serving 7 terminal points. It was originally granted the right to discontinue all passenger services in 1964, and thus this arrangement has been in effect with some occasional 11th-hour brow sweating for the past 12 years. The present 7 terminal points are Rockport, Ipswich, Reading, Lowell, Woburn, Bedford, and South Acton. Earlier this year the communities of Newburyport (extension from Ipswich), and Lawrence and Haverhill (extending from Wilmington) withdrew, as they did not feel they could justify their share of the 50/50 contract town (those outside the MBTA district) subsidy. The Legislature has since agreed to cover 75% of the cost, and this may encourage these towns to return.

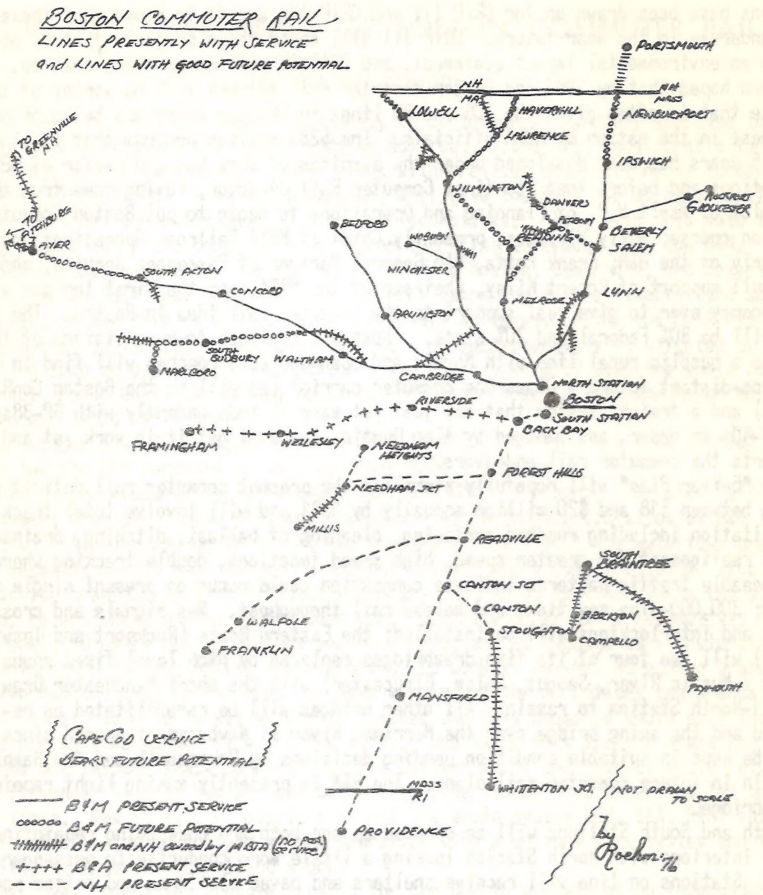
Of all the lines presently operating, the only one that will not see the benefits of future spending for upgrading will be the Bedford Branch that serves Cambridge, Arlington, and Lexington. This is due to the present plan to extend the Red Line rapid transit line (presently Quincy and Ashmont to Harvard Square) thru Arlington to Lexington along the B&M roadbed. The Bedford service is but one daily train weekdays only.

Plans have been drawn up for CRIP III and CRIP IV, and it is hoped that these can get underway in the near future. CRIP III will cover those projects that do not require an environmental impact statement, and CRIP IV will cover those that do. It is then hoped that by 1981 the Boston commuter rail network will be worthy of the praise that is often given the ICG and BN lines in Chicago which are being cited as the best in the nation by MBTA officials. The $283 million program that is planned over 5 years has been developed under the auspices of Dave Gunn, Director of MBTA Operations and before that its first Commuter Rail Director, having come from the ICG slot of Ass't V.P. of Planning and Operations to begin to put Boston Commuter Rail on course; Wally Williams, presently Chief of MBTA Railroad Operations and formerly of the B&M; Frank Fotta, B&M General Manager of Passenger Service, and with the full support of Robert Kiley, Chairman of the MBTA, and the first top man with the agency ever to give real support to the commuter rail idea in Boston. The funding will be 80% Federal and 20% state. Those who continue to have visions of the B&M as a bucolic rural line with Moguls and open-end wood coaches will find in the not-too-distant future a Class One commuter carrier (as will be the Boston ConRail lines) and a freight system that may just yet make it independently with GP-38s and 11 GP-40s on order, and managed by Alan Dustin, who will get it to work yet and who supports the commuter rail endeavors.

The "5-Year Plan" will hopefully stabilize the present commuter rail deficit somewhere between $18 and $20 million annually by 1981 and will involve total track rehabilitation including roadbed surfacing, cleaning of ballast, ditching, drainage, curve realignment for greater speed, high speed junctions, double tracking where foreseeable traffic patterns indicate congestion could occur on present single track lines; 300,000-plus new ties, and welded rail throughout. Nes signals and crossovers and interlockings will be installed; the Eastern Route (Rockport and Ipswich lines) will see four of its five drawbridges replaced by high level fixed spans (Draw 7-Mystic River, Saugus, Salem, Gloucester) with the short Manchester Draw and Draw 1-North Station to remain. All other bridges will be rehabilitated as required and the swing bridge over the Merrimac River at Newburyport unused since 1967 will be kept in suitable condition pending decisions by Portsmouth and New Hampshire to join in future commuter rail plans. The B&M is presently making light repairs to this bridge.

North and South Stations will be spruced up and both are undergoing repainting of their interiors with North Station looking a little more conducive to passenger comfort. Stations on line will receive shelters and paved platforms and better parking facilities, lighting, and signing. Maintenance facilities will be maintained and upgraded at B&M's Boston/Charlestown Engine Terminal and the ConRail Southampton St. Yard; major repairs will be done at the B&M's North Billerica Shop, now sold to MBTA.

There will not be any FIAT cars ordered altho the test unit will continue on line for a while yet; it is operating more or less as a convenience to FIAT and the MBTA for mutual publicity purposes. All 95 Budds (B&M and CR) will be rebuilt at a cost of about $285,000 each, as all are stainless steel and structurally sound. All Budd RDC-2 and 3 models will be rebuilt as coach-throughout units and all will receive new engines, transmissions, air and heating systems, wiring and interior rehabilitation. The present RDC-1 units will begin in the program starting in January, with the rest due for conversion in June. Thirty F40PH locomotives will be purchased with half the order to be made in January and half in June; once received, 5 will be used on rebuilt coach trains, 21 on trains with new coaches, and 4 as standby. The E8s will be traded in on these as will all but 5 GP-9s which are being rebuilt under CRIP II money along with 20 2500-series coaches (Shoreliner). New coaches will be Budd-built and Amfleet-styled but conforming in seating and other necessities to commuter requirements with 21 to be ordered in January and 63 in June. These new coaches and the F40PHs will be developed as push-pull type trains, some of which will operate on the B&M lines, allowing some B&M Budds to go to the NH/B&A side. Running times will be cut from 7 to 37%.



The lowest possible estimated increase in patronage will be 37% over the present system total of 15,000 riders daily. This will be handled in but a 6% increase in rolling stock. The B&M lines will see a 27% increase and ConRail a 56% increase in riders. The actual increases are likely to be greater than these conservative estimates. B&M now handles 10,000 daily, and ConRail about 5300, and B&M is down 5% from last year as a result of devastating winter failures in equipment and service.

New schedule frequency calls for peak headways of 15mins on all lines except north and east of Beverly on the Eastern, and south of Mansfield on ConRail, where it will be 30mins. Maintenance costs will be cut $3 million annually and the gross cost per rider will drop to $2.08 from $2.95 and the net to $1.02 from $1.89.

This rebuilding program applies only to those routes presently or very recently in active commuter rail service with the exception of the soon-to-be Red Lined Bedford Branch; other lines being purchased are not included in the 5-year rebuilding program altho this will not preclude them from becoming active commuter routes at some future time. The MBTA presently wishes to fix up what it has and what is being used rather than proceed with unproven extensions of service. Once the present service system is brought to desired condition, it will then entertain considerations for additions to the route structure such as into New Hampshire or branches like Peabody/Danvers, etc.

Finally it is a high green and a clear track for Boston commuter rail.

THE FUTURE OF THE SP COMMUTE LINE

by Lowell Clucas

In this age of subsidized commuter railroads, the Southern Pacific's service between San Jose and San Francisco is a running anachronism. The SP not only receives no financial help from any public agency; it has proclaimed often enough that it wants none. What the company wants is to opt out of the commuter business entirely, let somebody else digest the financial burden of ferrying its 8,000 regular passengers to and from work every day, and concentrate on serving its freight customers on the San Francisco Peninsula. But the way events are shaping up, it is possible, even likely, that the SP commuter line will continue to be the backbone of public transit in this part of the Bay Area.

Earlier studies of the future of public transportation in the West Bay, initiated by the 9-county Metropolitan Transportation Commission, focussed on extending BART to the San Francisco Airport from its present southern terminus in Daly City at the northern edge of San Mateo County, and then to Menlo Park at the San Mateo-Santa Clara County line. The operative grand design, of course, was to ring the Bay with BART eventually, in one big loop.

A major obstacle blocking the closing of the BART loop, however, has been BART's obvious lack of political support in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. While this coolness toward BART stems partly from its highly visible capital and operating costs, reinforced by reliability problems, the real issue is the equally visible existence of SP's double-tracked railroad on the Peninsula and its rail passenger fleet. On superbly maintained trackage and roadbed, the company moves 44 trains up and down the Peninsula every workday--22 in each direction over the 47 miles between San Jose and the trim new SP station at 4th and Townsend in San Francisco. In the nightly frenzy at 4th & Townsend, the railroad shoves its five most heavily patronized southbound trains out of the depot between 5:14 and 5:26pm on 3-minute headways, getting most of its evening rush hour passengers home by 6pm. Thru limited and skip stops, trains in the morning and evening commute periods average between 35 and 40mph, reaching 70 on the longer stretches--speeds that compare very well with BART's. Indeed, the SP is generally regarded by transit experts as one of the best-run rail commuter services in the country.

Moreover, the cost of riding the SP is reasonable--much too reasonable for the railroad's management. The company maintains that it spends $2 for every $1 it takes in thru the fare box. Fares are set by 6 zones, single rides ranging from a low of $1.15 for the 11½ mile run from San Bruno in Zone 1 to S.F., to the high of $2.55 from San Jose in Zone 6. However, since most SP patrons purchase monthly commute tickets at substantial discounts from the single-ride fare, the real cost to the daily user is considerably less. A monthly ticket reduces the San Jose-S.F. cost to $1.21 a trip. A monthly ticket from Zone 4 costs $40.50, compared to the Greyhound bus fare of $45.36, or $54 for a BART ride of a comparable distance.

In August, 1974, the SP applied to the state Public Utilities Commission for a 111% fare increase, taking its case to the public with full-page newspaper ads and sending shock waves thru transportation planners. A recently published PUC staff report on the request called it "tantamount to abandonment of the Peninsula commute operation due to the large passenger loss or diversion that would ensue."

At the time, the SP claimed a loss on the service of $5 million a year. The current figure used by SP, based on fully allocated costs, is $9 million. Arguing that the SP's "above-the-rail" loss was actually $1,856,000 in 1975, and only $701,200 if an investment tax credit were thrown in, the PUC staff has recommended that the Commission approve a fare increase of 25%. The Commission has as yet taken no action. The staff report says that service must be maintained so studies being made by other agencies can be completed and recommendations implemented with a minimum loss in ridership.

Because of the volume of commuter rail activity in the Peninsula Corridor, the two counties south of S.F. persuaded the transportation planners 2 or 3 years ago to shift their attention from BART extensions to the SP. The most significant of these new planning studies, now coming to a head, is the MTC's Peninsula

Transit Alternatives Project (PENTAP), which is scheduled to report to the California legislature in mid-January.

PENTAP's official mission is to provide the basis for selection of the future West Bay corridor transit system. Within the past several weeks, the project committee has reduced the various possibilities from 25 to 5, of which 4 definitely include retention of the SP. The fifth would eliminate the commuter railroad by extending BART thru the S.F. Airport to Millbrae, an SP stop just west of the airport. Trunk service from San Jose to BART at Millbrae and into S.F. would be provided by express buses, using the two main Peninsula freeways, 101 and 280. The chances of this alternative's survival as PENTAP's final recommendation are not considered good.

Alternatives 1-3 are options that start with minor improvements of the present or "baseline" system built on the existing SP and Greyhound bus services, moving up to Alternative 2, a "major upgrade" of the SP, and then to 3, the "high level upgrade." Alternative 4 is the same as 3, but extends BART from Daly City to the airport, with a station that permits an interchange with SP.

The "baseline" alternative essentially maintains the status quo, with better bus access to on-line stations. There would be no change in the location of the depot at 4th & Townsend, a good mile and a brisk 20-minute walk from S.F.'s Central Business District. The SP opened its new station last year to avoid an expensive freeway ramp at 4th St.

The "major upgrade" would extend the line to the Central Business District, ending in a new station in the Transbay Terminal at 1st & Mission Sts., a block from BART's Embarcadero Station on lower Market St. The Transbay Terminal is already an important transfer point for the East Bay's AC Transit and the S.F. Municipal Railway, and its potential as an important regional intermodal transit center is under intensive study. Alternative 2 would include bus shuttles from the SP main line to the S.F. and San Jose Airports, as well as parallel express bus service on the Peninsula freeways.

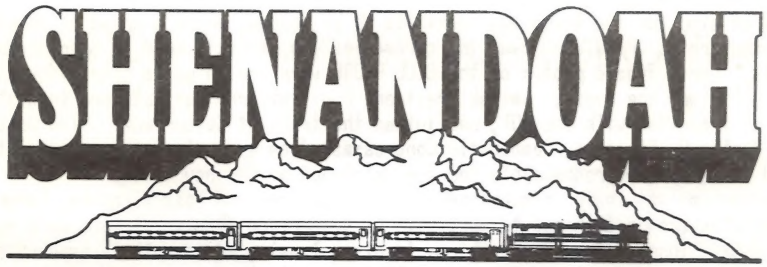
While Alternative 2 would retain the present double-tracked line, and is considered compatible with the SP's freight operations, the high-level upgrade, Alternative 3, approaches a rapid transit system. As a result, passenger service would have to be separated from freight trains in a 3-track corridor, requiring construction of a third track in existing or acquired right-of-way. On the surface, this solution would presumably appeal to SP management. In late 1975 the company made an offer to any authorized West Bay transit district to sell its commuter fleet of 83 bilevel and single-level cars (the latter are suburban coaches of 1923-27 vintage), its 24 diesels assigned to the service, and the westerly of its two tracks. The easterly rails would be kept by SP for freight.

But difficulties for the transit agency could arise from SP's conditions for the sale. The company insisted that the commuter service terminate at Daly City, where it would interconnect with BART, making use of an SP freight branch angling off from the main line at San Bruno, north of the S.F. Airport. It opposed retention of the San Bruno-S.F. segment for double-tracked, segregated passenger service on grounds that this would seriously interfere with freight movements. PENTAP is keeping its options open. In the end, the high-level upgrade of the line with its three-track corridor, whether it terminates at Daly City or the Transbay Terminal, implies capital outlays up in the BART class, not to speak of an extensive time frame for construction. The PENTAP committee may well reason that the market and Peninsula taxpayers are not quite ready for it.

In arriving at a final judgment, PENTAP has available an impressive analysis of the SP's commuter operation and its possibilities for attracting more ridership. Sponsored by the MTC and completed in 1975, the study is called "The Feasibility of Upgrading Peninsula Passenger Rail Service" and includes some persuasive arguments by a New Hampshire transportation consultant, Carl R. Englund, Jr. Mr. England makes clear that he regards the SP's commuter service as "very smartly run" from an operations point of view. "Its principal disability," he says, "a very major one from the standpoint of achieving satisfactory community ridership levels, is the lack of a desirable CBD (Central Business District) oriented terminal."

He repeatedly returns to this competitive disadvantage in the Peninsula transit market, citing what he calls a "demonstrated resistance to mass use of a Townsend Street location." He offers surveys and other evidence, from New York and Philadelphia in particular, to support the contention that the location of any commuter terminal is crucial to heavy use of the service. Even at Grand Central, 63%

(continued on page 15)



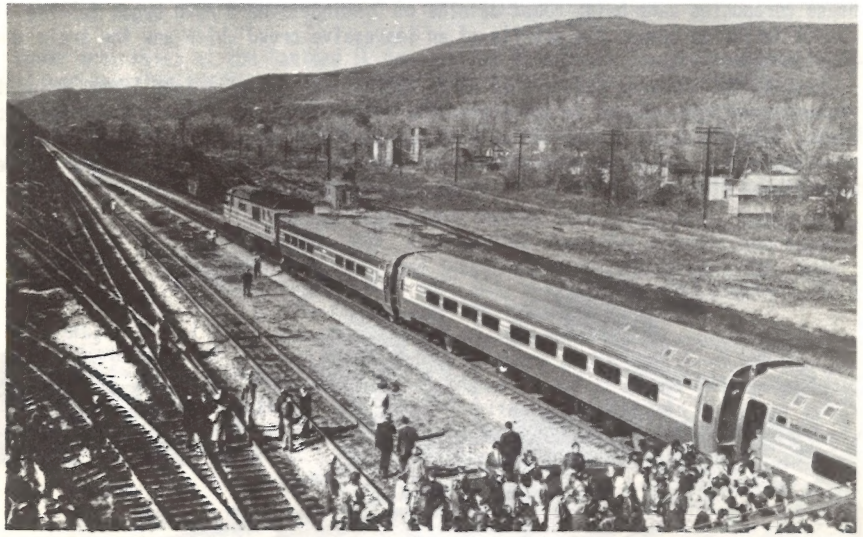
THE INAUGURAL RUN

by Jack Ferry

On January 19, 1947 the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad inaugurated the CINCINNATIAN, the first deluxe streamlined coach train between Baltimore, Washington DC, and Cincinnati. This train was steam-driven, but beautifully streamlined. Publicity of the time announced "Inside you'll find the world of tomorrow--ready for your pleasure today."

Nearly three decades later, on October 29, 1976, Amtrak inaugurated the SHENANDOAH, a new deluxe daylight passenger train between Washington DC and Cincinnati. The SHENANDOAH service is the last of the two-year experimental routes to be chosen by the DOT. The DOT announced the selection of the route on Oct 29, 1974--to run from Washington DC to Denver. The route was subsequently truncated to Washington-Cincinnati. The DOT chose three experimental routes before the Jun 20, 1975 announcement that Amtrak's Board of Directors would henceforth make the choices: Boston-Chicago (LAKE SHORE LIMITED), Norfolk-Cincinnati (MOUNTAINEER), and the present route. (Amtrak's own sole choice has been Seattle-Salt Lake City, for which preparations are currently being made.)

A small crowd gathered in Washington DC's Union Station for the Oct 29 press run (regular service would start Oct 31), and at 8:10am sharp the shiny new Amfleet train eased out of the station. The train, spotless inside and out, consisted



At Keyser WV the inaugural train is visited by a crowd at a short open house. Photos by the author.

of GE P30 diesel locomotive 710, Amclub 20126, Amcoach 21835, Amdinette 20207, and Amcoaches 21842 and 21188.

First stop for the train was Rockville MD at 8:35am, where a crowd of about 50 met the train. Presiding over the ceremonies was Amtrak's head of operations Dave Watts. Large framed photos of the BLUE RIDGE were presented to city officials here and all along the route. Amtrak President Paul Reistrup was detained in Washington at a meeting with the DOT, and joined the train at Cumberland. Also on board was Harley O. Staggers, Democratic Congressman from West Virginia, a legislator said to be largely responsible for the existence of the new train.

As the Amfleet train crisscrossed between Maryland and West Virginia, large enthusiastic crowds gathered to meet it. At Cumberland MD several cars were opened for public inspection. Mr. Reistrup in his welcoming address there emphasized that this train and its equipment are the finest in the country. He said that the SHENANDOAH needs everyone's interest and must be used if it is to succeed. Harley Staggers said "the equipment is beautiful and the train will operate for two years. If you patronize it, it will be here forever!"

Mayor Smith of Cumberland told the crowd that a short distance down the track is N D Tower, where the train will turn to the left and head for Parkersburg and Cincinnati. The tracks to the right head toward Pittsburgh and Chicago and are just as good as the tracks to the left, and he hoped that Amtrak would bring new service over this route in the future. Reistrup said that Amtrak is studying the possibility of routing its Chicago-Washington train over this route.

The tracks on the SHENANDOAH route are in excellent shape; the Chessie System is in the process of completing a major welded rail project here.

Following an open house at Keyser WV, home town of Staggers, the train began a spectacular climb up a 17-mile grade to Alta Mont. The scenery along here is beautiful, and the train passes thru several tunnels along the way.

Congressman Staggers detrained at Grafton WV. Among souvenirs of the trip were small cards bearing Staggers's portrait on one side and the train schedule on the other. At Parkersburg WV the train stopped for an overnight stay at 9:15pm, and the train was opened for inspection following inaugural ceremonies. Mr. Reistrup and his family detrained here.

The following morning at 9:30 the SHENANDOAH departed Parkersburg, into a dark and gloomy day. At Athens and Chillicothe OH large crowds turned out and open house ceremonies were held. Just outside of Cincinnati hard rain began falling. But it failed to dampen the spirits of an impressive crowd which saw the train arrive at about 3:45pm.

The CINCINNATIAN made this run in 11hrs 30mins. Amtrak will take 13hrs 34mins to run west and 14hrs 55mins to run east. The SHENANDOAH is limited to a top speed of 65mph. The B&O found it unprofitable to operate the CINCINNATIAN between Baltimore and Cincinnati, and it was discontinued in Sept 1950 and changed to operate between Detroit and Cincinnati.

(More photos on page 14)

THE GOLDEN (UNSPIKED) JUICE CEREMONY

THE INAUGURAL AUTO-TRAIN/FLORIDIAN

by Robert Clark & Dr. Russ Sklenicka

Under gray skies at the Sanford FL terminal of Auto-Train Corporation, the inaugural ceremony for the first joint FLORIDIAN/AUTO-TRAIN took place the afternoon of Oct 31. In Louisville KY on that date another inaugural for the first southbound train was taking place. President Eugene Garfield of Auto-Train and Amtrak's Harold Graham officiated at the Sanford ceremonies at which the train was christened with a half-gallon jug of Florida orange juice. The first northbound train consisted of Amtrak engine 648, Amtrak cars diner 8020, lounge 3811, coach 5472, sleeper 2788 "Berkeley County", and baggage-dorm 1520; and Auto-Train cars kitchen dorm 597, dome coaches 803, 902, 703, sleeper 602, auto carriers 112 & 118, car 15, and freight-type caboose 92.

(Above) Inaugural ceremony at Sanford FL on Oct 31. Amtrak's Harold Graham stands at center (striped tie) while President Eugene Garfield of Auto-Train (to right of Graham) holds bottle of Florida orange juice to christen Auto-Train car as the A-T and Amtrak consists officially join for the first time. (Left) The scene at A-T's Sanford terminal on Oct 31, with the first northbound A-T/FLORIDIAN at the far left, pulled by Amtrak engine 648. On the adjoining track are other A-T cars, and the station area is at the right. Photos by Robert Clark.

After the lengthy ceremonies, the northbound train left Sanford at 1:55pm. The southbound train had a similar consist, except that a fourth, double-decker auto carrier with a cupola built on top brought up the rear. The northbound train moved on to Jacksonville to meet the Miami section of the FLORIDIAN. The latter arrived there at 4:10, 15 minutes early, and consisted of engine 545, sleeper 2778 "Clarendon County", coaches 4452 and 4565, diner-lounge 8353 ("Travellers Rest" car), and baggage 1195. The baggage car was cut out, and two other baggage cars, 1050 & 1092, were added to the front. The combined train from Sanford arrived at 4:25 (10 minutes early), and after diner-lounge 8353 was removed from the Miami section, the entire consist from Sanford was coupled to the rear of the Miami section (behind coach 4565). This operation went very smoothly, and except for some problems with diner 8020, which the crew at Jacksonville worked on, the train managed to depart only 5 minutes late, at 5:10pm, heading for Louisville and Chicago. Patronage at Jacksonville was scant, but this was somewhat expected considering the flip-flop of the FLORIDIAN schedule was implemented without much prior publicity.

The method of operation at Sanford is for the FLORIDIAN to stop at the Amtrak station, then pull forward and back into the Auto-Train station to joing with the A-T cars going northbound. Southbound, they pull into the Amtrak station, then an SCL switcher takes the A-T section back to the A-T station. The first southbound train arrived Nov 1 as the SILVER STAR was at the Sanford Amtrak station. The FLORIDIAN was one hour late, and by the time switching was done, it left 1¼ hours behind.

No Auto-Train engines have been seen yet; when the Miami section is added, two Amtrak SDP40F engines are used as power. The second northbound consist on Nov 1 was similar to the first, but with one more auto carrier, and a dome coach as caboose.

At the inaugural ceremonies Mr. Garfield said he was returning to Washington to work on the planned Chicago-Denver train. Garfield said southbound bookings were all filled for the month of November.

(Above) The inaugural SHENANDOAH poses at Parkersburg, West Virginia. A new station is under construction at this stop.
(Right) Amtrak President Paul Reistrup addresses the crowd at Cumberland, Maryland during inaugural ceremonies for the SHENANDOAH. At far left of picture is Rep. Harley Staggers.

(continued from page 10)

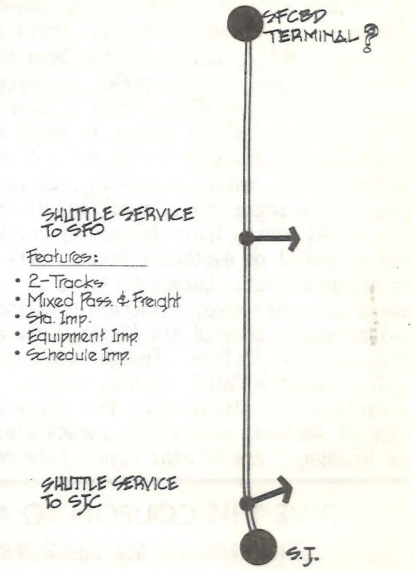
of the commuters walk to work, 24% taking the subway. He found that at 3rd & Townsend, still the end of the line when he prepared his report, it was virtually the reverse: 32% of the riders walked to work, more than 60% boarding a Muni bus, the rest taking cabs or jitneys. He estimates that a new station near Market St. would raise the basic city-oriented ridership from 7500 to 15,000 a day, and that off-peak passengers would go from 750 to 1750. He believes that special measures such as improved bus connections could more than double on-line local travel. His projections, if they proved out, would more than reverse the drastic decline in SP patronage in the last 20 years, restoring it to a level somewhat above the 1954 postwar workday high of 16,600 one-direction rides.

Attractive as this market potential might be to the planners, PENTAP will have to consider the capital and equipment cost implications of a Transbay Terminal station. The move would involve a number of street crossings and a tunnel under First St. to Mission of nearly a mile. Fewer stub tracks could be built, dictating a changeover to push-pull trains, following the example of some of the Chicago commuter railroads. Centralized Traffic Control and 2-directional signalling would replace the present system of conventional block signals on the main line. The costs would come to more than $100 million.

But this is far short of the $800 million, inflation included, projected for extending BART halfway down the Peninsula to Menlo Park, an alternative PENTAP is not now considering.

How will the SP management respond to a transit policy designed to keep the railroad and its corridor in the commuter business after its efforts to get out of it during the past three years? The application to the PUC in 1974 for a doubling of fares and the offer to sell the service to a Peninsula transit district in 1975 were followed this September by a new proposal: in return for being relieved of its commuter obligation, the SP said it would buy its 8000 daily riders one thousand 8-passenger vans for use on the Peninsula freeways. The "Vanpool" concept, which would have cost the railroad around $6 million, was greeted with virtually unanimous disdain by the Bay Area press, the transportation planners and the SP's commuter constituents. The company now concedes that the idea is dead.

#3 MAJOR UPGRADE OF RAIL



In the final analysis, the SP's attitude toward continued involvement with the commuter service may depend on who or what sits on the other side of the negotiating table. Nobody--no agency--sits there today. The strongest bargaining entity could be a new West Bay Transit Authority, established by the California State Legislature, subject to voter approval in the 3 counties it would represent. A joint powers agreement by the counties could be another institutional arrangement for dealing with the railroad, either to buy the service and lease it back to the company, or to work out a purchase of service contract.

In any event, a proposal to continue use of the SP and to have the company operate the service seems to be in the making. At some stage, the company will conclude where its interests and those of its stockholders really lie: in accepting the price of public intrusion in its Peninsula rail operations in return for relief from the climbing burden of running its commuter trains, or opposing the policy and program of the transit authority by whatever weapons are available at the time.

Whatever happens, PENTAP has begun a countdown on the future of rail passenger service for commuters on the San Francisco Peninsula.

"AN EVENTFUL TRIP" on the COAST STARLIGHT: On Oct 9 RTN's Peter Bretz caught the southbound train at Klamath Falls OR to travel to L.A. No. 11 arrived 50mins late at 11:55pm (consist: 2 SDP's, bag, bag-dorm, 7 coaches, dome lounge, diner, 2 10/6 sleepers, one 11-bdrm sleeper). Train was delayed north of Vancouver WA when it ran over a child; two youths had been throwing rocks at a BN freight and stepped into #11's path on blind curve, one escaped by diving down embankment. (Same day, a Seattle-Portland train struck a 13-yr old on a high bridge.) Porter woke Pete at 6:40am ("by Davis") to change to coach at Oakland; but it was 40mins before Redding! Train reached Davis at 9:51am and sat 39mins. Pete learned engine 571 had air tank spring a leak, making automatic stop (engine from passing freight had been used to pump up the brake lines, coupling onto rear). At Redding 2 SP SDP45's were put on train. At Davis, train delayed by broken down freight 20 miles ahead. STARLIGHT ran around it on eastbound track. Pete sees duck hunter pointing gun at train, but he doesn't shoot. Leaves Martinez about 4hrs late, meets train 6, then STARLIGHT makes emergency stop; fisherman crossing tracks behind #6 was almost struck by #11 --lead engine brushed his fishing pole and tackle box! Train delayed 10mins, arrived Oakland 12:15pm. Freight engines removed, engine 214 (F40) put on. The diner (8071, ex-SUPER CHIEF) is hot, no A/C. Reach San Luis Obispo at 6pm. Pete signs a chit for free dinner, but free meals aren't publicized. Train makes unexpected stop at Ventura; county fair parade blocks tracks for 15mins. Final L.A. arrival is 10:38pm, 3 hrs 43 mins late. Pete remarks, "I look forward to future AMevents."

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Mixed Train of Thoughts

THOSE PLASTIC MATTRESS covers will be eliminated from Amtrak sleeping cars, our Pete Bretz learned late last month in an interview with an Amtrak man from Washington. The decision came when some high Amtrak people themselves encountered the heat-producing covers and suffered the same problems complained of by many paying riders. That's one advantage of having Amtrak people ride their own trains: they learn of some of these problems first hand. The mattress covers will evidently be replaced by more conventional material..... OVER THREE QUARTERS of Amtrak passengers are now riding in new equipment on short distance routes, Amtrak said Nov 15. And almost half of all Amtrak passengers are in new cars. Two-thirds of all Amtrak trains are presently made up of new equipment. Paul Reistrup said this is a "remarkable turning point" in rail travel history. At no other time in history, not even in the heavy post-World War II period, was there such a high percentage of new cars running on American rails. About 78% of all train miles are now done by new cars, the other 22% by older cars. The Metroliners are not included in the new car count. All the Boston-Washington trains are now Amfleet, including the NIGHT OWL and SOUTHERN CRESCENT. The NIGHT OWL carries a steam generator car to heat the conventional sleeper included with the Amfleet equipment. Four sleepers (2622, 2634, 2642, and 2697) have been modified with Amfleet-type diaphragms for this service. The SOUTHERN CRESCENT thru cars run ahead of the Amfleeted CRESCENT in the schedule.....

* * *

CBS EVENING NEWS on Nov 12 ran a TV story on Canadians who cross the border to the U.S. to do shopping at lower prices. The TV screen showed the Amfleet PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL loaded with roundtrip travelers to Seattle. A total of 480 such riders made the trip on Nov 11..... HOW GOOD ARE Amfleet cars compared to the best European passenger cars? Modern Railways (Sept) compared Amtrak's 492-car Amfleet to England's 300-car Mark III rolling stock and France's 1500-car Corail fleet. The magazine said that Amfleet is as good as any conventional European rolling stock..... NEW AUTO-FERRY SERVICE has started in the East. Passengers drive their cars to a New York City freight yard where their cars are put aboard railroad auto carriers. The passenger then flies from Kennedy airport to Florida, and his car is carried on regular freight trains to Florida..... GREATEST RAILFAN TRIP ever might occur next summer: The American Freedom Train Foundation has asked Amtrak to take steam engine 4449 back to Portland OR, and Amtrak reportedly would run a cross-country steam trip with it, using conventional Amtrak coaches, domes, diners, and lounge cars. If the plan is finalized, the train would start in Miami and run to Portland via Birmingham, New Orleans, San Antonio, El Paso, Phoenix, Los Angeles, and Oakland. The train would run only in daylight hours and make overnight stops in the cities mentioned..... OCTOBER SCHEDULE CHANGES saw Amtrak newspaper ads appearing in Chicago to announce the daily service on the INTER-AMERICAN and in Cincinnati and elsewhere to announce the startup of the SHENANDOAH. Both ads featured a map of the train's route. TV ads for the SHENANDOAH appeared locally in Cincinnati.....

* * *

DAILY TURBOLINER SERVICE begins on the Empire Service route Nov 15, now that Amtrak has five of the new turbine-powered trains available. The WATER LEVEL EXPRESS begins daily Turbo service that date..... RENO FUN TRAIN begins its seasonal runs on Jan 21, and will operate nine weekends. It leaves 6pm Fridays from Oakland CA and returns from Reno on Sundays. Complete excursion package costs $69.95..... THE ONE CHANGE in October schedules that we have seen criticized is the combining of the SOUTHWEST LIMITED and LONE STAR. One reader calls it an "unmitigated disaster," pointing out the 18-car limit so no expansion is possible and the long stops in Kansas City..... A TRACKAGE TEST was conducted by the FRA and Amtrak on ICG between Chicago and New Orleans from Oct 26 to Nov 5. The test train was made

up of one Amtrak diesel engine and coach and DOT test cars T-1 and T-3.....
A SPECIAL MEETING on bomb threats against commuter and passenger trains was held in Chicago Oct 28, attended by representatives of the FBI, Chicago Police Dept, Cook County Sheriff's Office, Santa Fe, BN, ICG, C&NW, Milwaukee Road, Rock Island, South Shore, ConRail, and Amtrak. It was agreed that a coordinated effort on the part of all concerned is needed to handle threats against passenger trains. A working committee was established to review and condense procedures now used by individual railroads into a set of uniform guidelines for all railroads.....

* * *

HERE'S AN UPDATE on the shifting plans for assignment of bilevel cars: latest news is that they will go into service from north to south in this order: EMPIRE BUILDER, NORTH COAST HIAWATHA, SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, COAST STARLIGHT, SOUTHWEST LIMITED, and SUNSET LIMITED. The cars will be briefly broken in on the PANAMA LIMITED before being assigned to the above trains. Cars presently on the SOUTHWEST LIMITED and LONE STAR will be put on the LONE STAR and INTER-AMERICAN, with seasonal usage on the PANAMA and FLORIDIAN, apparently in the winter..... THE MONTREALER DERAILED around midnight on Oct 27-28 near Thompsonville CT. The last 3 cars of the northbound train left the rails. They were uncoupled and after passengers were transferred, the rest of the train continued north, arriving Springfield about 1 hr late. The derailed cars blocked both tracks, and morning passengers were bused between Springfield and Hartford. The line was cleared the afternoon of Oct 28 and the cars moved to Springfield. Cars involved were 7800, 4403 and 6018..... THE MADISON HOTEL at Boston's North Station, handy for many railfans, closed permanently on Nov 1.....

* * *

A SPECTACULAR UPSURGE in ridership of the SAN DIEGANS occurred last month. Numbers of passengers increased 80% in October from October 1975. There were 40,462 riders last month compared to 22,385 in 1975. Amtrak attributed the increase to the introduction of Amfleet equipment and the adding of the CALTRAK SAN DIEGAN, the fourth roundtrip, to the schedule..... EXTRA SNACK CAR will be added to the COAST STARLIGHT consist Nov 13-30, Amtrak announced Nov 12. Amtrak's press release qualifies for our Slip of the Month Club: it said the car will feature "simple hot entries." Let's get a car with the cooling system working..... AMTRAK WILL BUILD a new station in St. Louis, a one-story glass and masonry structure about a mile from the present terminal. The cost will be $6.4 million, and completion date is early 1979. The present building is one of the nation's architectural gems, and presumably some other use will be found for it so as to preserve it. (The trainshed is in deplorable shape.)..... THE "SANTEXPRESS SPECIAL" express package rate on Amtrak has garnered much more business than Amtrak expected, partly due to a United Parcel Service strike in the East..... A TRAIN COLLISION in Poland Nov 3 killed 25 persons; a train standing at a station near Czestochowa was struck by an express train..... SOME OMINOUS SIGNS on the petroleum-usage field: this country is using more gasoline this year than ever before in history and increasing its dependence upon foreign oil. At the same time, the oil-producing nations are meeting in January with plans to increase petroleum prices from 5 to 20%..... DECISION TO ELECTRIFY the rest of the Northeast Corridor as far as Boston will be made by Dec 1, comes a report from Washington.....

* * *

A STORY EMBARRASSING to the Japanese National Railways was revealed in mid-October, after initial efforts to squelch it: a Bullet Train last July accidentally started up and ran for 20 minutes at 55mph with no engineer in the cab. The automated train suffered no damage, but the operator, who had left his cab to kick shut a sticking door, thereby precipitating the automated departure from the Mishima station, was demoted in shame to a maintenance inspector. The story out of Japan was quick to point out that the Bullet Trains have carried over a billion passengers since 1964 with not a single casualty. In other JNR news, fare increases averaging 50.4% were put in effect Nov 6, and more increases are planned for next year.....

FOR THE BEGINNING of SHENANDOAH service, Amtrak issued timetable form 14, which includes the JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY and the MOUNTAINEER as well; and a timecard with an advertising blurb on one side, using the SHENANDOAH artwork also seen at the head of Jack Ferry's article on page 11. We have not yet seen other Oct 31 timetables, but an East Coast reader reports seeing timetable forms 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 9 so far.....
THE "DESCHUTES DAYLIGHT" runs again: an SP freight wreck at Dougren OR about 5:30am on Oct 28 blocked the line and resulted in train 14 being held at Klamath Falls until a BN crew could be rounded up to pilot the northbound STARLIGHT on a detour over BN and Oregon Trunk tracks via Bend, thru the Deschutes River Canyon. The southbound train from Seattle that day also took the detour and because of the delay a makeup train ran Oakland-L.A. on the 29th (see Cars & Consists, p.2)..... THE FREEDOM TRAIN engine 4449 could end up in Alhambra CA, where the mayor is working, with city council approval, to put the train on permanent display. SP is being asked to donate a display track, and a philanthropist would underwrite the cost of moving the engine there..... THOSE FORMER ZEPHYR consists owned by Civic Plaza National Bank president Alex Barkett have finally been sold to Saudi Arabia and shipped away from Kansas City. Purchase price was an estimated $5-15 million. All the cars were moved out of K.C. simultaneously, making a most unusual consist. Leaving K.C. at 8am Oct 19 behind Santa Fe engines 3163 and 3202 were cars Apollo, Neptune, Mars, Vulcan, Jupiter, and (rest of names preceded by "Silver") Courier, Bar, Bell, City, Grill, Tone, Threads, Slipper, Flash, Herald, State, Sides, Lining, Lake, Tip, Service, Skates, Screen, and Beam. The train moved at freight speeds, not over 50mph, and went on the LONE STAR route to Houston preparatory to overseas delivery. Train was designated #395-S9 "Saudi Arabia Special"..... THAT DERAILMENT OF the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR of Oct 18 reported last issue has been blamed by BN on a metal strap that broke off a coach and lodged in the track ties, according to UTU News.....

* * *

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION reports that capital expenditures for highways ran to about $11 billion in 1975, while only $1.8 billion went into railroads.....
ANOTHER NAME MENTIONED as a possible successor to DOT Secretary Coleman (besides those listed on page 3) is that of Bert Lance, an Atlanta banker, who was transportation commissioner under Gov. Carter in Georgia and who unsuccessfully attempted to succeed Carter as governor two years ago. Lance assisted Carter on transportation matters during the Presidential campaign..... THE CLEARANCE CARD, membership newsletter of the S.W. RR Historical Soc., reports that Gerald Ford's campaign train of Oct 16 between Joliet IL and St. Louis had few Amtrak people aboard because they got word that the campaigners didn't want "any of the Amtrak bunch" aboard, except those needed to operate the train..... DOT SECRETARY COLEMAN was interviewed Nov 9 by a Washington Post writer, and he criticized Amtrak for ordering new equipment while not cutting back "money-losing operations." He said Amtrak should exist only in "busy corridors"..... THE NORTHBOUND PALMETTO was involved in a collision near the Charleston SC station Oct 12 at 9:15am. An oil tank truck ran into the side of the PALMETTO's engine at a crossing, but no one was seriously injured, altho the truck was totalled. The train was delayed 1 hr 45 mins. There was several thousand dollars damage to the locomotive..... THE NEW JERSEY Dept. of Transportation and ConRail have been running Football Special trains to the new Meadowlands stadium from Suffern NY and from Dover. Trains run on these dates: Oct 10, 24, 31; Nov 14, 28; Dec 5, 12. By noon on Oct 8 the first trains had been sold out, so two 9-car trains were planned, to hold 3600 passengers..... PRICES ARE DOWN in Mexico, due to devaluation of the peso, reports a Phoenix reader. A bedroom for two on the crack all-Pullman EL TAPATIO between Guadalajara and Mexico City now costs just $16.86 U.S. funds (down from $18.06 in 1973 and $27.25 more recently), to say nothing of 30¢ beer in the club car and the $1.50 steak or chicken dinner in a diner with tablecloths and fresh flowers.....

COST OF TRAVELING by rail is decreasing relative to the cost of auto travel, according to New York State Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Using latest DOT figures, the Dept. reports that the cost of a round trip for two people between Albany/Rensselaer and Montreal is $66 by train but $81.27 by auto, figuring 17.9¢ per mile to operate the car for 454 miles..... LONG ISLAND COUPLE who complained that their love life was disrupted by noise and vibration from nearby Long Island Rail Road trains last month dropped their complaint..... THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE last month ran a series of articles on Amtrak's first five years, including a photo of bi-level cars under construction at Pullman-Standard in Hammond IN..... READER TOM PULSIFER of Xenia OH president of OARP, was appointed by Ohio Governor James Rhodes to the Ohio Rail Transportation Authority, a 5-member board overseeing matters relating to Ohio rail services including branch lines and passenger service present and potential. Three previous members resigned as they were in conflict of interest, working for railroad companies..... THE EXPANDED CONSIST of the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR (see Cars & Consists, p.2) for those celebrating inauguration of the Colfax CA stop on Oct 31 was not quite enough for the numbers wanting to ride. Despite 18 cars, about 100 standees were reported. The Sierra got its first snowfall of the season a few days ago, to add to the scenery riders on the SFZ can enjoy..... THE RIO GRANDE has removed the 9-foot model vista dome car from its monument pedestal in Glenwood Canyon CO, because of repeated vandalism to it. The car's dome and glass windows were broken. The 8001b car, named "Glenwood Canyon," is now stored in a utility room of the Glenwood Springs depot..... THE FIRST CONSIST of the combined SOUTHWEST LIMITED/LONE STAR looked like this as it came south into Kansas City Nov 1: engines 503, 518, 617, 507, 615; cars 1034 (to Houston), 1029 (L.A.), 5012 (deadhead to L.A.),9992, 9922, 9975, 9980, 9929; (to Houston:) 9910, 9928; 3382, 8043, 2759, 2726; 4828 (to Dallas); 2216, 9352, 2728 (thru slpr not on yet). Mail-baggage cars now run thru from NY to Dallas on the NATIONAL LIMITED and LONE STAR..... THE SWEDISH LOCOMOTIVE X995, pulling Amfleet cars in the Corridor, has a new schedule: northbound it leaves DC at 7am with train 102, southbound it leaves NY at 11:30am with train 111..... CP RAIL HAS ANNOUNCED that the "Princess Patricia" will cruise once again to Alaska in 1977. The cruise season begins May 31 and runs thru early September.....

5-YEAR PLAN (continued from page 3)

A total of 120 new Metroliner cars will also be sought; these would be "Metroliner II" cars, a more advanced design which would be incorporated in two prototype cars before purchase of 118 others. Amtrak also plans to lease two LRC trainsets from the Canadian builder to test on the Vancouver-Seattle-Portland routes in a two-year trial. For locomotive needs, Amtrak wants 144 new engines: 25 diesels in fiscal 78; 82 high-speed lightweight diesels including two prototypes (possibly the AMT-125; see RTN, First April issue); 31 electrics along with one prototype; and 6 combined diesel-electrics. No Amfleet cars were listed among Amtrak's wants for the next 5 years.

RATE THE TRAINS!

RTN'S FOURTH SEMI-ANNUAL READER TRAIN RATING SURVEY

Only a few weeks remain until the Dec 31 deadline for submitting ratings of trains ridden between July 1 and that date. On the adjoining page is a rating form for your convenience; however you can make up your own form or write your ratings and comments on any sheet of paper or a postcard. Complete instructions appeared in the Second September issue. Use a 9-point scale to rate each of the 11 rating categories (A-K) for each train. On the scale, 1 equals "very poor", 9 equals "very good", and the mid-point (5) is "average, acceptable." Results will be published as soon as possible after the Dec 31 cutoff date.

SEND YOUR RATINGS TO: Rail Travel News, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Thank you!

RTN'S TRAIN RATING FORM

NAME & ADDRESS:

.....

.....

.....

Can we use your name? _____

TRAIN NAME & NUMBER	DATE RIDDEN	A Overall	B Non-food Crew	C Food Crew	D Food Quality	E Car Condition	F Routing	G Stations	H Track	I Scheduling	J Promotion	K Type of Cars	COMMENT SYMBOL*
													1
													2
													3
													4
													5
													6
													7
													8
													9
													10
													11
													12
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	

*COMMENTS: to add comments, copy circled number on separate sheet, write train name after it, followed by your comments.

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Avoid disappointment--Make your holiday Amtrak reservations NOW thru the rail specialists, Let's Travel, 3780 Elizabeth St, Riverside CA 92506. 714-787-8350.

GUATEMALA RAILFAN FUN-TRAIN--Jan 21-Feb 6, 1977--Narrow Gauge steam special train thru GUATEMALA mountains--visit round house and yards. Private cars SOONERLAND and MISTLETOE. Starts in Oklahoma (join anywhere). Write Midwest Travel Service, 2936-R Bella Vista, Midwest City, Oklahoma, 73110--Phone 732-0566.

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LETTERS

I have been a subscriber to your excellent publication for a little over a year. I consider it the most informative source regarding railroad passenger transportation in North America.

I am enclosing an item that I happened to see in a Boston paper late in September (Ed. note: in the item a DOT official speaking to NAMBO criticized Amtrak's subsidies and said passenger service was of "highly questionable value" in many cases). The DOT official involved, like his superiors..., is serving as a flack for the truck and bus industry, a now familiar role for DOT officers at all levels. When it comes to spending public funds, these gentelmen do not mind tossing out $7½ billion a year for highways while telling us at the same time that the $450 million Amtrak deficit threatens the country with utter disaster. The venality of these people is of course offensive enough. But the stupidity of constantly urging still more recourse to automobile and truck transportation despite the known facts regarding present and future petroleum supply simply defies understanding.

Notwithstanding DOT's consistent hostility to Amtrak, rail passenger transportation in this country is really undergoing improvement. Last August I had the opportunity to travel from St. Louis to Oakland by rail. For the entire distance, the food was good and reasonably priced and the service was adequate and courteous...

Now that the election is over, Paul Reistrup ought finally to get an opportunity to use his remarkable talents to show what he can really do.

Prof. George H. Hildebrand
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

Just finished three weeks of riding most of the Western trains on Amtrak. While Amtrak is really trying to "make trains worth traveling again," and while they have made strides, the on-train service personnel were nearly without exception lacking in a true concern to make the trip one that a passenger would enjoy. On the SOUTHWEST LIMITED out of L.A. Oct 24 the dome lounge attendant was so insulting that many passengers sought refuge elsewhere. The sleeping car attendant in car 431 did not make up beds, answered no calls for help, and when I detrained in Kansas City, I had to tell him that I was getting off and to please open the door. Even at that, a request to help with luggage from an elderly lady was met with a grunt. The diner lost electricity and could not be used on the 2nd and 3rd days out, but that is not nearly as serious as the bad attitude on the part of a few crew members. Many of the riders confided that it will be a cold day in hell before they ever return to the rails.

Oh, SUPER CHIEF, where are you? Oh, train crews, when are you going to stop driving people away, instead of making them feel at home as they ride the rails?

Robert Bedford
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Concerning the struggle over the location of the Cleveland Amtrak station (see RTN 1st Oct issue): I was born and raised in that area of Ohio and spent many enjoyable moments in and around both the Union Terminal and Union (Pennsylvania) Station. The advocates of a lakeside terminal are whistling thru their hats when they say that the area by the lake is both safe and convenient. It is neither... Any attempt on the part of the Amtrak supporters to cloud the issue with flowery words should be taken with a grain of salt. Their argument that the Cleveland Union Terminal in Public Square is dangerous is a bunch of hogwash. This is the heart of Cleveland and is an interesting and exciting place to be. The Terminal area is still a beautiful place to see and most certainly has to rank as one of the loveliest stations ever built. To say that the Terminal couldn't be made ready for trains in three years time is an outright lie...

Robert Scholl
Carlsbad, New Mexico

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